

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

180741Z Sep 03

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005900

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR, ANKARA MAYOR DISCUSS LOCAL
ADMINISTRATION, UPCOMING COURT CASE AGAINST KURDISH DEHAP

REF: ANKARA 5848

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman. Reason: 1.5 (b,d)

1. (C) Summary: In a Sept. 15 meeting with the Ambassador, Ankara mayor Melih Gokcek expressed hope that the AK Government will pass local administrative reform. He expects that the more controversial aspects of the reform will be taken up after local elections, which are scheduled for next April. Gokcek said that the High Election Board is coming under pressure to increase DYP's representation in Parliament, which would shrink AK's overwhelming majority. Gokcek firmly believes that if this occurs, P.M. Erdogan will call for new elections. End summary.

2. (SBU) After warmly greeting the Ambassador, Gokcek outlined the administrative challenges facing the city. He said his office had recently distributed textbooks, which were fully funded by the Government, to all primary school students. Cooperating with local businesses, the municipality had raised enough funds to purchase additional computers for schools. Gokcek said transportation issues -- road and metro construction and dealing with harsh winter weather -- will occupy most of his time in the run-up to local elections, which are currently scheduled for April.

3. (SBU) The Ambassador thanked Gokcek for the municipality's close cooperation with Embassy on security matters. In particular, the Ambassador noted that the vehicle barriers on Paris Caddesi should act as a deterrent against vehicle bombs. The security of the Embassy is important not only for Embassy employees but also for Turkish citizens living nearby. Gokcek agreed, saying "we are ready to help in any way."

Local Administrative Reform

4. (C) The mayor, who joined the ruling AK Party last month, explained that the Government is currently drafting legislation regarding local and public administrative reform. Noting that he has contributed to the Government's draft substantively, Gokcek said that, if passed, the new laws would give some additional authority to municipalities. He complained, however, that the more controversial aspects of reform -- that is, providing municipalities the legal means to collect additional revenues and freely allocate resources -- are on hold. These reforms will probably not be taken up until after next spring's local elections. Gokcek attributed the delay to resistance from some parts of the military but did not elaborate.

DEHAP Case

5. (C) Commenting on the outstanding case against the pro-Kurdish DEHAP Party (reftel), Gokcek said he believed the higher court would uphold a previous ruling that DEHAP did not participate in the Nov. elections legally. Gokcek said that left to its own devices, the High Election Board (YSK) would not annul the election results or allocate additional seats to the center-right True Path Party (DYP). However, Gokcek claimed that the YSK is coming under pressure from "certain circles" -- a turn of phrase often used by our Turkish interlocutors to refer to Establishment elements in the military and judiciary -- who are uncomfortable with AK's huge parliamentary majority. Although no one wants to cancel the election results -- which could lead to political chaos, Gokcek said -- AK's rivals want to clip the party's wings and make it harder for AK to change the constitution.

16. (C) If the election results are annulled, Gokcek believes support for AK in any new election will be higher than the 34 percent the party received last Nov. In Ankara, for example, AK is polling seven percent higher now than in November, according to data collected by Gokcek's office. The mayor noted that xenophobic Genc Party is also polling above the ten-percent threshold to get into Parliament. He claimed that disaffected voters from the main opposition, center-left CHP are now supporting Genc.

17. (C) If the YSK allocates additional seats to DYP, Gokcek said that P.M. Erdogan will immediately call for early general elections. "I am not saying 99 percent; I am 100 percent certain the P.M. will go to elections in that case."
EDELMAN